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Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 OES-06 ERDA-05 CU-02 AID-05

AGR-05 EB-07 COME-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00

DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 SAJ-01

TRSE-00 OMB-01 STR-04 /100 W
---------- 060271
R 190727Z JUL 76
FM AMEMBASSY VALLETTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6896
INFO AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
USMISSION NATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L VALLETTA 0833

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, IT, MT, LY
SUBJ: MALTA: ANOTHER "TRIPARTITE MEETING"

REF: VALLETTA 0580

1. ITALIAN AMBASSADOR DA-RIN TELLS ME THAT THE NEXT SESSION OF THE TRIPARTITE MEETINGS BETWEEN ITALY, MALTA AND LIBYA (DESCRIBED REFTEL) WILL BEGIN HERE ON JULY 20. THE MEETINGS IN MAY OF THE SAME PARTICIPANTS SUCCEEDED ONLY IN IDENTIFYING SOME BROAD AREAS IN THE LIBYAN DEVELOPMENT PLAN WHICH WOULD BE SUSCEPTIBLE TO JOINT VENTURE PARTICIPATION. THE MEETINGS THIS WEEK WILL DISCUSS THESE AREAS IN MORE DETAIL, AND DA-RIN HAS SUCCEEDED, WITH "GREAT DIFFICULTY," IN CONVINCING A LARGE AND PRESTIGIOUS GROUP OF ITALIAN OFFICIALS AND BUSINESSMEN TO ATTEND.

2. IN THE TEXTILES FIELD, ITALIAN EXPERTS FROM MONTEFIBRE WILL BE ATTENDING TO EXAMINE THE POSSIBILITY OF UTILIZING LIBYAN COTTON AND ITALIAN EXPERTISE AND EQUIPMENT IN ESTABLISHING TEXTILE PLANTS IN MALTA. DA-RIN SAID THE
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SERIOUS LACK OF WATER ON MALTA MADE THE DYEING OPERATION

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A PROBLEM BUT HE THOUGHT IT COULD BE OVERCOME. DISCUSSIONS
WILL ALSO CENTER ON THE POSSIBLE ESTABLISHEMENT OF FOOD
PROCESSING PLANTS (CANNING OF FISH AND VEGETABLES),
A FACILITY FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF SMALL YACHETS AND
OTHER SIMILAR CRAFT, AND ELECTRICAL PARTS SUCH AS TUBES,
CIRCUITS AND SWITCHBOARDS (THE PRESIDENT OF ITALY'S
STATE ELECTRICAL BOARD WILL BE PRESENT FOR THAT DISCUSSION).

3. PERHAPS MOST INTERESTING IS AN ITALIAN PROPOSAL FOR
SOME KIND OF CENTER FOR "PHYSICAL AND NUCLEAR SCIENCE"
IN MALTA, FOR WHICH THE ITALIANS WOULD PROVIDE THE
EQUIPMENT AND UNDERSTAKE THE TRAINING OF TEACHERS AND OTHER
STUDENTS IN THESE FIELDS, PERHAPS UTLIZING THE FORMER
MALTESE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION COMPLEX (SEE VALLETTA 0729),
RECENTLY PURCHASED BY THE LIBYAN GOVERNMENT. ALSO ENVISAGED
IS A POSSIBLE MECHANICAL ENGINEERING FACILTY WHICH MIGHT
PRODUCE SMALL AGRICULTURAL IMPLEMENTS AND OTHER MACHINERY.

4. IN TURNING TO THE LAST ITEM ON THE AGENDA, FISHERIES,
DA-RIN NOTED RUEFULLY THAT THE COMING TRIPARTITE MEETING
WAS OFF TO A VERY INAUSPICIOUS START BECAUSE OF THIS
PARTICULAR SUBJECT. HE SAID THAT ON JULY 15 AN ITALIAN
FISHING TRAWLER HAD INADVERTENTLY STRAYED INTO LIBYAN
TERRITORIAL WATERS AND THE VESSEL AND CREW SEIZED BY
THE LIBYANS. THE CREW FACED THE PROSPECT OF SIXTEEN
MONTHS IMPRISONMENT (LIBYAN JUSTICE MUST BE SWIFT,
BUT IDID NOT PRESS THE POINT). DA-RIN SAID THAT ROME
WAS "VERY UPSET" AT THE LIBYANS AND HAD AT ONE POINT
THREATENED TO CANCEL THIS WEEK'S MEETING AS A RESULT.
DA-RIN HAD PREVAILED ON ROME NOT TO CANCEL, HOWEVER,
AND HOPED INSTEAD TO USE THE TRIPARTITE MEETING AS
A FORUM IN WHICH THE ITALIANS COULD APPEAL TO THE LIBYANS
TO TAKE A "LESS HARSH" ATTITUDE.

5. DA-RIN ALSO CONFESSED THAT HIS EFFORTS TO SET UP
THIS MEETING WERE "LIKE PULLING TEETHC" BECAUSE OF
RESISTANCE IN ROME TO SITTING DOWN AT THE SAME TABLE
WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF "SUCH A FANATIC" AS COLONEL
QADHAFI. HE HAD HAD PARTICULAR DIFFICULTY IN RECRUITING
THE KEY ITALIAN BUSINESS EXECUTIVES HE WANTED BUT HAD
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FINALLY SUCCEEDED IN DOING SO. LIBYAN AMBASSADOR TO
MALTA JALLALA WILL PRESUMABLY HEAD THE LIBYAN TEAM BUT
DA-RIN WAS UNCERTAIN WHICH OTHER LIBYANS MIGHT ATTEND.
INDEED, HE SAID, "THE LIBYANS DON'T SEEM TO BE MUCH
MORE ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT THE WHOLE PROJECT" THAN HIS
OWN ITALIAN COLLEAGUES.

6. COMMENT: AS REPORTED EARLIER IN VALLETTA 0260,

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THIS EXERCISE IS A RESURRECTION OF AN OLD IDEA OF
MINTOFF'S GOING BACK TO 1972. THE IDEA REMAINS BASICALLY
THE SAME, I.E. TO CREATE AN ILLUSION OF MOVEMENT TOWARD
A RAPID INDUSTRIALIZATION OF MALTA (COMBINING LIBYAN
MONEY, ITALIAN TECHNOLOGY AND MALTA'S GEOGRAPHIC
LOCATION). THE GOAL IS TO PROVIDE MINTOFF WITH
ADDITIONAL AMMUNITION TO USE IN THE COMING ELECTION. SMITH

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